

PUBLIC SAFETY



PRESS RELEASE

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State Fire Marshal Says Missouri Must Act to Avoid Similar Wild Fire Devastation

SPRINGFIELD, Jan. 6, 2005—The National Weather Service in Springfield has issued a “Fire Weather Watch” over the weekend for the Missouri Ozarks. The weather system creating the wildland fire problems in Texas and Oklahoma during this past week will be moving into the state.

Over the past 12 months the southwest region of the state has experienced below average precipitation. Rainfall deficits ranging from 10 to 16 inches has created severe drought conditions in the Ozarks. Weather forecasts indicate temperatures will reach into the 60’s on Saturday and Sunday.

With the unseasonably warm weather this weekend many citizens may see an opportunity to work outdoors around their property clearing leaves and other dead vegetation. State Fire Marshal Randy Cole urges Missourians to refrain from any open burning when conditions such as this are present.

“We need to avoid any repeat of the devastation that has occurred in Texas and Oklahoma and raise the public’s awareness as to the effect weather conditions have in relation to open burning,” Cole said.

Property loss is a concern, however, more importantly is the potential loss of life resulting from a small leaf fire escalating to an out of control natural cover fire.

“Not only are residents in danger in these situations but so are our responding firefighters,” Cole said.

In addition, please be aware that local jurisdictions may be issuing “burn bans” in their area as a result of this fire weather watch. Violations of such burn bans may result in criminal charges.

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